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EXTENSION PROGRAMS REFLECT INTEREST OF FARM WOMEN. 0.35 ★

A radio talk by Florence L. Hall, Extension Home Economist, U. S. Department of Agriculture broadcast in the home demonstration radio program, National Farm and Home Hour, Wednesday, October 2, 1935.

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The other day I read a letter from a homemaker who told in a delightful way, how extension programs reflect interests of farm women. The letter was from Mrs. Mary Mendenhall of Baldwin County, Alabama. She said: "When I joined the home demonstration club five years ago I discovered a treasure chest. Not the kind of chest you keep hidden in the attic but a real treasure chest from which gems are taken each month on club day.

"Jewels from this chest have made our home new. Slip covers on chairs, crisp curtains at the windows; little homemade conveniences which add comfort to living.

"Money was scarce--wardrobe expenses reduced. Visions of a family of girls in faded, out-of-date clothes trooped before me. Then the club's treasure chest opened. Dresses from last year stepped into this year's styles. Old coats became smart jackets. Large hats were made small. No family member, thus arrayed, was ashamed to venture forth, for clothes were becoming and fitted well.

"This chest had more treasures", continued Mrs. Mendenhall. "Food was prepared so the children didn't know they were eating minerals and vitamins. In mid-winter the family might exclaim, 'Where did fresh corn come from at this season?' only to find it came from last summer's garden. From the club I learned to can vegetables and meats.

"This is what home demonstration work means to me," says Mrs. Mendenhall, "a chance to make our homes happier, more healthful, more convenient; a chance for recreation; a chance to broaden our views and use our influence for right in things concerning State and nation." That is how home demonstration work appeals to Mrs. Mendenhall.

In more than 40,000 (home demonstration) clubs similar to the one Mrs. Mendenhall describes, women are learning better ways of homemaking. I visited several States this summer and it was my good fortune to talk with some of these women. Many are studying to be better managers of home affairs. More than 20,000 kept home accounts last year to find where they stand in this matter of home finances. They say "The records surprise us by showing what a large part of our living comes from the farm."

A Rhode Island woman said, "Accounts prove to my husband and me it is good business to make the farm produce most of our food even though income is higher than two years ago. We get a liberal food supply of

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greater variety, we use cash for such things as clothing, labor saving equipment and fixing up the house", and she concluded by saying, "we have better health and a better living all around."

Farm women are becoming "Consumer conscious". Here are a few of the topics they study at home demonstration clubs:

"Your money's worth in buying furniture".

"Mrs. Consumer and Her Clothing Dollar".

"Read the Label Before Buying".

"Counting the Cost of Things Prepared at Home".

Speaking of counting the cost of home canned goods, New York women made a study of tomato juice to find out how much they could get for five cents. Buying in cans or bottles they got about one cup for a nickel. Buying tomatoes, canning them at home, five cents bought four cups of juice. When they raised tomatoes and canned the surplus they got twelve cups of juice for a nickel. In home canning, these women used glass jars on hand, and didn't count their labor.

In North Dakota, women are dramatizing consumer information. The extension service of that State has a playlet which is called "Neighbors at the Grocery Store". This brings out points in saving time and money, such as "Plan your buying", "Make a list," "Read the label," "Buy in quantity." Besides gaining new ideas on buying, the women have a good time putting on the play for members of their group.

And now here is the viewpoint of one more farm woman. Mrs. Paul Lacey, club member in Oklahoma says, "Running a home is like running a business. We have kept records for years, and each year our family grows more interested. Each month, as we figure our earning and spending, is like taking a picture of the whole month's work. My two girls work with me, and when records show where we spend too much or too little, the family is more willing to put the money where it is needed most. Some months--no gain--we're blue and discouraged--feel like moving, but the entire year's record encourages us and we determine to keep on," says Mrs. Lacy. This is what this homemaker said.

The use of business methods in homemaking is one of the signs of the times. Extension programs in every State reflect this modern trend.

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